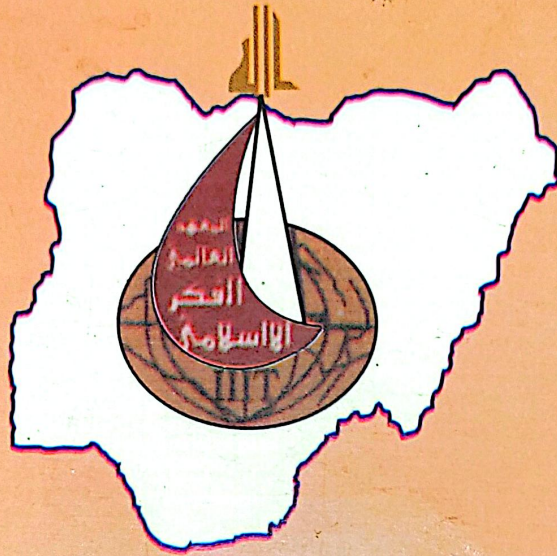


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Edited by

Aliyu Kamal

Aisha G. Habib

Ismail Bala

Umar Jibrilu Gwandu

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P. O. Box 13733

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Tel: 08037484023

iiitnigeria@yahoo.com

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The Role of the Islamic University Student in Modern Society

Ahmad Murtala, PhD

Department of Islamic Studies and Shari'a

Bayero University, Kano

murtalamansur@yahoo.com

Abstract

Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge. Being a student in a university requires one to be hyperactive in learning and have the extra desire of imparting the acquired knowledge to the appropriate societies. Study in an Islamic university is, of course, an added value that requires additional sacrifice and adventure for promoting the Islamic ideology. This paper intends to draw the attention of Islamic University students to be alive to the expectation and show reasonability and effectiveness in carrying out their responsibilities in and outside the University. The society, with its variant facets, is, for sure, the better ground for affecting changes, making people good men/citizens and improving the quality of their lives. The paper designs possible ways that the Islamic university student should follow to build a positive self-image and salvage his society from mess in accordance to the Islamic stipulations. Such a student is the one that would jolt theories out of the ineffectualness cycle, keep knowledge alive and prevent it from becoming inert. It is hoped that the paper will serve as torch that would redeem reverence and admiration, which university students enjoyed in the past.

Introduction

Until recently, the majority of university Muslim lecturers have their higher education training in one of the Western universities, which have already adopted the policy of "shaking the faith" of the student¹. The influences of this flagrant training have made a number of students, consciously and unconsciously, think and work harder for the benefit of their masters. The matter that has seriously erupted and damaged the identity, culture, language and,

more especially, the religion of those particular students. The common people, however, exercise their sense of assumption to extend the blame to other innocent students.

Arresting such a socio-religious predicament and curtailing its offshoots, of course, would even be enough reason for establishing Islamic universities in Muslim countries. Muslims have every right to exercise their religion, poster their ideology and educationally nurture their children according to the Shari'a right from the nursery up to university level. It is evident that University education encompasses the other levels in the sense that it caters the needs and change the society is facing.

Being mostly young and in the beginning of life's formative period, a university student has a vital role in building a good quality society. For shouldering such monumental task, a student should organize himself in such a way that he could combine concentration on his study together with some extra-curriculum activities that will positively touch the society in general. A Muslim student would struggle, all the time, to retain the vitality of his relevance among the people he lives. Islam is a positive religion, as we all know, and only active Muslims enjoy it better. A Muslim studying, especially in an Islamic university, is, of course, in a better position to cope with the pieces of advice and tips, which will be given in the following pages.

The Flourish and Scope of University Education

The university is, by definition, an institution of higher learning and research, which grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects and provides both undergraduate and postgraduate education. University education, therefore, is a general and specialized knowledge and skills that enable a university graduate to look at the problems, which confront the society, or to perform scientific research for pedagogical purposes in particular and the benefit of humankind in general.

Though academic activities are the backbone of the university system, however, the university, for being an integrated institution,

activitiesⁱⁱ.

University education consists of, at least, three integral things that make up a complete so-called 'university'. These are students, lecturers and different disciplines for conducting researches. Living in a university environment obliges a student to be engaged in doing three things, namely, attending lectures, discussion academic problems and conducting researchesⁱⁱⁱ.

In Europe, the first university established was Bologna University in France in the late 11th century (precisely 1088 C.E). The University of Salerno in Italy, as the second university in Europe, might have been established during that period. The origin of these universities can be traced back to the Roman Catholic Church schools^{iv}.

The case was very different in Muslim countries. The schools in its current form, of course, were not known during the early generation of Muslims^v, but the modern-like university system was in existence since the 3rd Hijri century. The schools established by Abu Hafs Al-Bukhari (d.217 A.H), Abu Hatim al-Busti (d.354 A.H), Abu al-Walid Hassan bn Ahmad Al-Naisaburi (d.349 A.H), Dar al 'Ilm, which was built by Vazir Abu Nasr Sabur bn Azdasheer in 383 A.H^{vi}, et.c were the first set whose functioning resembled to some extent the current university system^{vii}.

Imam Abdulqadir Al Nu'aimi (d. 927 A.H), a great historian of the 10th Hijri century, undertook a lengthy investigation concerning the great schools that had existed in Damascus in his compendium on the history of Islamic schools, "Al-Daris Fi Tarikh al-Madaris". It can be observed from the descriptions given in the book that, from 4th down to the 10th Hijri century, there had been several schools that fulfilled most, if not all of the characteristics of a 'university'.

In the 859 C.E., a wealthy Tunisian lady, Fatima Al-Fehri, founded a mosque and an affiliate school to it in Fes, Morocco. The school, which is named, University of Al-Karaouine, eventually becomes the first and the oldest degree-granting university in the world^{viii}. This institution has marked the

beginning of the establishment of the Islamic university in Muslim society.

In the 4th Hijri century (precisely in 358 A.H), the Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo was built for prayer purposes. However, after some three and a half years in the 10th century (365 A.H- 975 C.E), it was expanded to acquire an academic nature and commissioned as a school of higher learning. Since then scholars and students have come from nook and cranny to study at the hands of eminent scholars or give lectures to the over flooding students.

A. L. Tibawa has explained the nature of learning in Azhar in the early days. He said, "A student moved free from one circle to another till he found his level or despaired. There was no time limit. The process could have taken a few years or might have lasted for the greater part of life..Progress was marked not by a diploma of an institution, but by a license of one of its teachers. An established teacher taught, from a given text by commentary or dictation, those who chose to join his circle. Later on, an assistant would repeat the master's lesson for the benefit of those who did not follow all its intricacies. A repeater was usually one of the bright students chosen by the master. It was a recognized practice for students to raise questions and argue with the teacher in the course of the lesson. Many a student made a name for himself and became an assistant in this manner. Such assistants eventually became the leaders of the circles themselves"^{ix}.

It would be refreshing also to know that Seldjuk Vizier named Nizam al Mulk Hassan bn al Tusi was credited for establishing well-organized universities in 1067 C.E. in Bagdad and many other locations in Muslim cities, including Isfahan, Nishapur, etc. It was known as "Madrasah Al Nizamiyyah" after its proprietor. The curriculum taught in the school had consisted mainly of two things. One is scholastic theology, meant for the production of Imams, Sheikhs and spiritual leaders. The second things are the earthly and pragmatic branches of knowledge for the production of clerks, physicians and other government servants^x. The duration of study, according to Imam Abu Ishaq al Shirazi, was usually four years at most^{xi}. The astonishing thing about this school was that the

dents and lecturers were sumptuously paid special salaries by government. It also provided hostels, three-square meals, books and all the necessary academic facilities free of charge^{xii}.

Until very recently, most scholars in the golden ages were encyclopaedic in nature. This gave them the chance of heading schools and teaching various branches of knowledge. Despite this, they were relieved, at times, by some bright students. Of course, not everybody was given the privilege of teaching in those schools and universities). There were rigorous conditions; the chosen ones must pass before being granted such a chance. The ranks of those who were eligible to teach ranged from a Professor (Ustadh), Lecturer/Teacher (Mudarris), Assistant Lecturer (Na'ib al Mudarris), Graduate Assistant (al Mu'id), etc^{xiii}.

It is well-established fact that since the first revelation to the prophet (pbuh), the right of receiving free education has been granted to everybody regardless of their gender and age, provided they are physically, mentally and emotionally fit. The women especially were given the full freedom of learning^{xiv}. History has documented a lot of information about women who excelled in knowledge to the level of the production of students and books^{xv}.

The early universities in Muslim countries were open. Nonetheless, their counterparts from Europe remained exclusive for elites and well-to-do people. It was only in the 1914 onwards that university learning becomes open to everyone in Europe and America^{xvi}.

The Aim and Objectives of University Education

Two things, in the main, are the aims of university education, thus, higher learning and research. Both must go together for a university to retain its name. With teaching alone, whether it is advanced or not, the university would become not more than a secondary or tertiary school. While if it offers research only it becomes a mere research center/institution not in the sense of a university^{xvii}. Seeking knowledge and developing it is the common ground in the varsity between students and lecturers. If they wish success, they must come together, brainstorm, run free discussions

on academic issues and conduct researches for promoting knowledge.

Our universities, of course, do conduct researches, however, the majority of the researches are drab; they do not consist of any in-depthness nor are they that sparkling in outcomes and results! This attitude should be changed if the authorities are serious and want to see our universities conducting deeper, vivacious and comprehensive researches, which would have serious effects on society.

The mechanism of research is not only the availability of inspiring books, high advanced machinery and big laboratories, but also there must be zest of life; a common connection between students and their lecturers. This habit makes lecturers who have expertise in their respective fields corroborate actively with their ambitious students in order to produce something magnificent.

Alfred North Whitehead, a leading philosopher in 19th century, was of the opinion that education and research despite their punctuality in the university system are not the main aims of its establishment. To him, "the justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning. The university imparts information, but it imparts it imaginatively. At this is the function, which it should perform for society. A university, which fails in this respect, has no reason for existence... Youth is imaginative, and if the imagination be strengthened by discipline this energy of imagination can, in great measure, be preserved through life. The tragedy of the world is that those who are imaginative have but slight experience, and those who are experienced have feeble imaginations. Fools act on imagination without knowledge; pedant act on knowledge without imagination. The task of a university is to weld together imagination and experience"^{xviii}. The amalgamation, therefore, would be excellent if the parties concerned mutually cooperate and benefit each other. The students must be handled compassionately, wise pieces of advice that would guide to the good researches and

virtue should be instilled in them. They have also to be restrained from being foolhardy and recklessness in learning and research! Besides developing knowledge and publicizing it, research, indeed, helps other unapparent objectives of university education to come out. Each university has to meet the needs of its host society in particular and the aspiration of the nation in general. Hence, establishment of Islamic university in Muslim society is imperative.

In most times, as is obvious, research exposure brings students out from mere imagination to the understanding of reality. Moreover, of course, the universities make a potential cadre and prepare them as a workforce in special governmental and non-governmental sectors. Unfortunately, the conversion of acquisition of knowledge at universities to the meal tickets turns to be the core and absolute aim of university education, particularly in Nigeria. Serious researches conducted or being conducted from the areas of Arabic to Anatomy are very few. Most of the researches are repetitive and full of plagiarism. The ambition of the most students is akin to amassing money for luxury life after graduation. For this reason and probably many others, a linguistic-oriented student would work with a bank or any other lucrative office in the financial sector. Likewise, a student trained in dentistry would abandon dental services to secure a job with insurance companies. This messy attitude has made university learning a mere corridor, which a student goes through, without the university going through them.

The Peculiarities of the Islamic University

Education, whether religious or secular, is divinely required in Islam. The instruction about reading is even the first revelation. "Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Read and your Lord is most Generous- Who taught by the pen- Taught man that which he knew not" (Q; 96:1-5). This verse shows Islam as a religion of learning. It orders Muslims to read and write, without specifying to read religious knowledge alone, but all avenues are open; both revealed

knowledge and the acquired sciences are purely Islamic provided they are read in the name of Allah! Hence, the foundation of the Islamic University must be different; that it is a means towards the fulfilment of Allah's directives. It is true that whatever branch of knowledge a Muslim, reads but in the name of Allah is considered compliant and a merit to him. However, study in an Islamic university for its spiritual atmosphere is really an added advantage.

The devotional intention is the cornerstone of seeking knowledge in Islam. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Whoever learnt knowledge by which the Face of Allah is to be sought, but he does not do so except for attaining a goal of this world, he will not smell the fragrance of Paradise in the Day of Resurrection"^{xix}.

Establishing an Islamic university or maintaining it is a great sacred deed for being a citadel of education. It resembles building a mosque with a good intention; Allah will accept it, reward the initiators and facilitate its affairs. The best description of a secular university with an appalling curriculum is like a building on collapsing grounds (Q9:108-9).

A student must have a good intention and the determination for doing right after his/her enrolment. He would prepare his mind for the spirituality, which the university would bestow on him. By making his good intention for seeking knowledge, he, undoubtedly, becomes a typical vicegerent of Allah on the earth. And, of course, by doing things in good faith and putting his knowledge into practice, he would positively fulfill the mission. Imam Al-Qabisi, one of the early Muslim educationists, said, "The objectives of education are represented by generalizing the meaning of faith, Ihsan, virtue, standing firm and reformation"^{xx}. These sorts of values are, undoubtedly, among the characteristics of the Islamic university.

The Prophet (pbuh) described the excelled position of knowledge-seekers in Islam. He said, "Who takes the path hoping for knowledge, Allah makes easy for him the path of Paradise. Verily, the angels lower their wings for the seekers of knowledge out of pleasure of what he is doing. Verily, all in the heavens and earth seek forgiveness for the knowledgeable, even the fish in

water. The excellence of knowledgeable over the servant is like the excellence of the moon on the night of the full moon over the planet. Verily, the learned are the heirs of the Prophets. The prophets do not leave a dinar or a dirham, but they inherited knowledge and he who takes it takes a great bounty”^{xxi}.

Western universities suffer from the lack of or rather a diminishing sense of spirituality in their system. They realized the danger of the situation. “The primary emphasis is upon knowledge that is useful and helps to make profit, rather than the main emphasis being on seeking truth..Knowledge is no longer valued because it provides ‘the truth’, though, or because it helps to make people more rational. Essentially, enjoying yourself and making money become most important to people”^{xxii}. This is the current situation of knowledge and prevalent trend in the West. The same has penetrated greatly into the Muslim countries by ‘virtue’ of the colonialism and later by globalization!

Two Western eminent writers have expressly exposed the truth about the currently sad situation of the university system, more especially in their countries. Marvin Bartell, a great contemporary western scholar, asserted that, “demand of global capitalism hinders the university’s ability to fulfill its cultural mission”. Therefore, universities are becoming more concerned with “equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills in preparation for the job market, which is increasingly global in character”^{xxiii}. Therefore, the major aims of university education nowadays are getting a job and earning money.

John C. Summerville, a bishop, author and dignified university professor, commented on the deterioration and decay in respect of capitalism, which the secular university education in America and Europe has reached just because they separated it from religion. He realized that not only the universities suffer, but also their view of the negation of God has even created a huge vacuum in the spiritual sense of Western societies. The apparent negative impact on them has been “serious intellectual, emotional, spiritual and ideological problems”^{xxiv}. However, it is an undeniable fact that Muslim countries have adopted the education system of the West

and America and have since started harvesting the same consequences like their masters. For the secular system unfailingly promotes immorality in politics, corruption in society, illegal practices and a bad economic system.

Unlike the secular system, a university based on Islamic stipulations must have promoted a sense of religiosity among its students. That is why it would serve as the real citadel; Muslims turn to for having a fillip for the faith and getting the right answers to the life questions. We believe it would do because it was in practice and had produced scholars who "were not pursuing education just to get a good job, or get a title or a certificate. Theirs was aimed at making them good ideal citizens"^{xxv}. Nevertheless, in the West where secularism prevails, "the universities are not really where we look for answers of our life questions", said Summerville, "That is the sense in which they (universities in the West) seem marginal"^{xxvi}.

Materialism and whatever benefit brings to individuals' worldly pleasure is the philosophy that supports the secular universities since their establishment to date. One may spend time in learning but his worldview is very shallow and constrained in achieving individualistic goals. He always thinks about himself alone, without care even if the society will banish, provided he fulfills his desire!

This has been the habit of some elites in many societies in Nigeria. They become self-centered for the orientation they had during their stay in the "Western" universities. It is because of this or the other reasons, Sheikh Wazir Junaidu of Sokoto said, "Paper qualifications should be important for appointments but these must be balanced by integrity and dedications, etc. for proper education to be achieved, therefore, we need to train our people in physical and social sciences, in religion, ethics and morality and civics. Any type of education that excludes any of these disciplines is, in my view, incomplete. I cannot see how being expert in, say, geography or physics or a given language alone can produce an honest, disciplines and considerate good citizens, if the expert has received no injection of noble and lofty ideas pertaining to his duties, to his

fellow countrymen and to humanity at large, and to his self-criticism, his accountability etc.

"In everything there is a sign that indicates the uniqueness of Allah" - as it was wisely said. The core of education enables students to realize the effectiveness of Allah, the Wise and the Omnipotent. This type is what the Islamic university should focus on, not mere training. Most secular universities nowadays produce a management workforce and workers in different domains, sometimes with the less required pure knowledge. The education the Islamic university gives would definitely be different in any regards. It is a thought-provoking one, which makes the student to ponder over his area of study in order to use it in promoting the understanding of the oneness of Allah, who alone deserves to be worshipped (Tawhidic paradigm). The core of education is a means that makes people surrender to Allah and worship Him alone. It is the knowledge that helps in identifying the signs of Allah's powerfulness over creation and thriving for implementing the Shari'a in society. This education, of course, leads to reflection and then contributes actively towards the betterment of the people.

Islam as a dynamic religion puts good morals among the primary mission of the Prophet (pbuh). Allah says: "It is He who sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom- although they were before in clear error" (Q62:2). Though the verse apparently has defined the core mission of the prophecy, impliedly it also sees manifest the mission of an Islamic university in three things, thus, Reading, Purifying and Teaching. It can be shortened in two words, thus, character and learning, which have been the conditions on which universities nowadays conferred degrees to their students.

Students should value good morals and behave always according to Islamic manners, which should be inculcated in them right from matriculation up to graduation. Muhammad bn Sirin, one of the scholars of the Tabi'un, had described the proper way, the Sahabah and Tabi'un followed in learning. He said, "The salaf used to learn manners as they would learn knowledge".

In the Nigerian context, Muslims have inherited a unique education system (Tsangaya and Zaure Education Systems), which a student goes through up to becoming a fully fledged-Islamic scholar. However, one of the ironies of today is that such a distinctive system is diminishing gradually. Presently, the students undergoing that system are very scarce in both urban and rural areas; Western formal education has taken, unfortunately, the lion-share of the entire learning system. If care has not been taken for reviving our unparalleled system, it will totally die out. Though it is hoped that the newly developed Islamic university system would, seemingly, be the only 'concrete hope' that would clinch for us a large portion of that system.

The Qualities of the Islamic University Student

Early Islamic scholars have prescribed the qualities; an Islamic studies student must acquire and abide by. In recent times, the qualities also suit every Islamic university student regardless of his/her area of study. Below is a mention of the most important qualities of an Islamic university student.

1-**Good intention** is the bedrock of any activity in Islam. The rewards would not be granted if the intention were bad. Allah said, "They were not commended except to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion" (Q98:5). Students must realize that seeking knowledge itself is a sort of devotion (Ibadah)^{xxix}. Seeking knowledge, according to Imam al-Shafi', is even more advantageous than supererogatory prayers^{xxx}. Some of the early scholars have said, "Knowledge is a secretive prayer and the worship of the heart". This reason alone is enough to move an active student in such universities to be courageous and a man of high aspirations in knowledge. Allah taught the Prophet (pbuh) to say "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge"-(Q20:114). Therefore, little knowledge would not quench the thirst of an energetic student. In this regard, it is good to emulate the most knowledgeable among the lecturers. Ibn Hazm has put it in a clear way. He said, "When you compare yourself with others in matters

of wealth, position, and health, you should look at people less favored than yourself. When you compare yourself with others in matters of religion, knowledge and virtue, look at people who are better than yourself”.

2-Humbleness (Tawadu’) is a very important enhancement factor for all the seekers of knowledge in general and not is for a university student alone. The essentiality of humbleness is needed more especially in receiving knowledge, discussing academic issues or writing it and in socializing with other people. It was wisely said “Whosoever manifests himself before his time, and then he has manifested himself to humiliation”^{xxxix}. To avoid intrusion into such dilemma, Imam Al-Ghazali advised that, “Teachers should explain to learners that the objective of seeking knowledge is to draw someone close to Allah without boasting or showing off”^{xxxix}.

It is pertinent to state here that a proud and an inhuman manner do not fit a true knowledge seeker at all. It is wonderful, nowadays, to see a newly admitted student in the conventional universities, shouting in pride signalling that he is now of age, civilized and a man of high prestige. In addition, it becomes evident on campuses at the sight of higher ranked scholars that a poignant student can easily be identified by boasting-walking, talking, and looking at people in a majestic manner, just because he is now a university student. Such students are neither humble nor quite; hence, they are, undoubtedly, not ready for learning at all. This is contrary to the Islamic Imam Mujahid bn Jabr, one of the companions’ disciples, had put it rightly: “The shy person and arrogant one will not learn knowledge”^{xxxix}. Making such arrogant behavior amidst their teachers and fellow students reflects the way such students would treat the society! An Islamic university student would not behave in that unreasonable way.

3-Honesty and Truthfulness: Knowledge is a trust. One must not neglect its importance. It is among the best things that a student must hold. It should characterize his manner of acquiring

knowledge, conveying it in speech and in writing and during implementation. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas has rightly said, "The Islamic university must reflect the Holy Prophet in terms of knowledge and right action; and its function is to produce men and women resembling him as near as possible in quality, each one according to his inherent capacities and potentials; to produce good men and women; to produce men and women of Adab, in emulation of him"^{xxxiv}.

4-Gentleness and Modesty: An Islamic university student is expected for modesty and moral uprightness not like the student in secular universities, who is always free and active in dating and mingling with women. Committing sins, for sure, is among the devastating factors that would ruin a student's ability, curtail his academic performances and eventually make him daft. Abdullah bn Mas'ud had said, "I, indeed, consider that a man loses knowledge, which he once had, due to a sin he committed"^{xxxv}. It was also reported from Imam Shafi' to have said, "I complained to Sheikh Waki' bn Al-Jarrah about the poorness of my memory. Therefore, he directed me to shun disobedience and sins. And he informed me that the knowledge of Allah is light and Allah does not give His light to the sinners"^{xxxvi}.

5-Firmness and Commitment: A student must be firm in seeking knowledge. He may encounter some impediments that can deter his keenness, but he has to stand firm and shun all those obstacles. Yahya bn Abi Katheer said, "Knowledge cannot be gained if one is at rest"^{xxxvii}.

6-Respect for Lecturers: Knowledge is a very special bond that exists between a student and his teacher, each feels admiration for the other. A student with an Islamic spirit would venerate his lecturers and hold them always at a high esteem, while mentioning, speaking to them, or putting questions on them, and many other things. Unlike some of the conventional university students, more especially the intelligent among them, they actually lack a high

level of such sensation. For this reason they, sometimes, disgust their teachers and belittle their researches and presentations. Education of such students might not be blissful.

7-Avoidance of Bad Companions: Most students come to a university with the ambition to have expertise in their areas of study, but unfortunately deviate and make evil-minded friends. The danger of this ill choice will certainly be a source of endless psychological disturbance throughout the student's life. That is why befriending good people who can be described, as the salt-of-the-earth is very important. Everyone is in need of them except a total misfit person. Abu Musa Al-Ash'ary narrated, "The Prophet (pbuh) said, the example of a good companion (who sits with you) in comparison with a bad one is like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith's bellows (or furnace); from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes or your house, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof" ^{xxxviii}.

In the same vein, Wadi'ah Al-Ansary narrated: "I heard `Umar bn Al-Khattab advising a man saying: 'Do not speak about things that do not concern you. Stay away from your enemy and watch out your friend except the trustworthy and the trustworthy is the one who fears Allah and obeys Him. Do not accompany the evil ones lest you may learn from their dissoluteness. Do not tell them your secrets and do not consult them about your affairs except those who fear Allah' ^{xxxix}.

A wise student, and all Islamic university students should be wise, thrives hard to develop all such qualities in him. Of course, numerous books have been written on the etiquettes of seeking knowledge. However, most of it was written for the students of the early generations, though majority of its tips and clichés are still alive and relevant. And the content can simply be paraphrased in the light of the modern situation.

Students and the Expectations of Society

Most of the time, society, is passive; a recipient of what the active individuals whether good or bad are able to actualize and encrypt in it. Among the characteristics of modern society, there is a high rate of literacy and the utilization of a high breed of technology, which, in essence, enhances the rapid dissemination of information, industrialization, developing infrastructure and buildings. Globalization also becomes part of modernization, which, in one way or the other, affects people's ways of life. These factors would have penetrated and made a negative or positive impact on the thinking, mode of life and culture of people. A student, more especially an Islamic university student, would find this environment a very challenging one that requires his/her utmost attention. With the guide of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah, which are the core education, all the challenges facing Muslim Ummah could easily be pinned down.

Education supported by the Qur'an and the Sunnah is the supreme power that makes a rapid and delightful change in any society. History is a witness that the magnanimity of the revelation has boosted the Muslim Ummah in Bagdad, Spain, Hausaland and many other places to record excellences in every aspect of knowledge. We are still hoping that the Islamic university students will be awakened and geared to actualize positive changes in the society. The impressive arrays of beneficial knowledge would always guide and direct its bearer to prosper a good life and help others to develop. Providing the 'good life', for a determined student is not confined to himself or some selected people or his wife's relatives alone, rather it hits forward beyond that limit, where the larger society will benefit. Having good relations with the society is half of the successful influence on the people living around. Ralph Emerson had given a concise description of the influence of the student of knowledge on peoples' minds. He said, "A teacher's ability is a belief that he can change people"^{x1}.

1-The paramount role, which comes first, is the concentration on study. The more students study deeply, the more their respective societies become delightful for the increase of learned persons,

those who will be a source of development to the society in future. This has been clearly spelt out by Sheikh Zayn al Deen Muflih bn Abdullah Al-Habashi. He said, "Allah has put knowledge and aggression in the urban areas. He also put wealth and ignorance in the rural areas. It is because of the scholars' knowledge that Allah provides urban wealth directly from the rural. It is also because of the ignorance in the rural that aggression is rampant over there"^{xli}.

2-The primary goal of education in Islam, after being Ibadah itself, depends on the acting, implementation and utilization of the acquired knowledge. This suggests that the student is supposed to start practicing his knowledge right from the first time he learnt it. Society, with its divergent facets, is the testing ground of any knowledge. One of wise people said, "When knowledge intends to enter a city, it would call upon the act, if it responded well, they go together. If it did not, knowledge sneaks away"^{xlii}. Abu Abdurrahman al-Sulami had rightly described the manner in which the early scholars followed in acquiring beneficial knowledge. He said, "

3-A student must socialize with the society in good manner that would strength his affiliation to it. The Prophet (pbuh) has said, "Have fear of Allah wherever you may be, and follow up a bad deed with a good deed which will wipe out it out, and behave well towards the people"^{xliii}. Khatib al Baqdadi had admonished the student as saying: "Acquire knowledge and perform deeds as much as you can, and do not let vain pastimes and argumentation distract you. Always make it your goal to benefit the people. Beware of fatigue and weariness overtaking you. Admonish your brother with gentleness when he makes a mistake, for knowledge is affectionate with those who are overcome by errors. If you are amidst a people that have no religious morals command them to do good when they act ignorantly. If they disobey you, then remind them without getting annoyed. Be patient, strive in patience and do not let their actions worry you. Have patience whether they are oppressive or fair"^{xliv}.

4-In this age of globalization, a student must understand the needs of the modern society. This entails knowing how to tackle its problems according to its complexity and suggest possible way out. It is the age of internet. So a student can create personal webs and blogs and use social media like Twitter, Facebook and text messages in order to interact directly or indirectly with the society and diffuse to the general people or fans his/her ideas. One word sent via societal media, might change the whole life of a person or a group of people. An active student would not abandon utilizing such chances. It is, of course, a great opportunity for making people do good and forbid bad. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Spread from me even a verse"^{xlv}.

5-Sometimes, the society may need awareness about certain developmental projects or against some problematic ones; the student would convey relevant truth and information concerning that particular plan to the people. The Prophet (pbuh) had said, "A believer is like a mirror to his brother"^{xlvi}. An Islamic university student, by training, would not cast the ambitions or tribulations of his community dawn. From the professionalism angle, an enthusiast student is to undertake this responsibility in favour or in defense of his people.

6-Our societies are full of illiterate and less privileged people; students in their spare time would approach such people to teach them reading and writing. They may require special adult classes for basic religious knowledge or anything that can enhance their worldly life and promote them in the Hereafter. Students may gather some amount of money or fairly used- clothes from those who have them in excess for distribution to orphans, widows and the other poor and needy. In some cases, it would be good if the students, more especially in groups, pay courtesy visits to prison yards and orphanages to see the situation thereof and offer kind of assistance, which they can afford.

7-Most of the Muslim countries fall under the democratic type of governance and not all of its populace know their rights and privileges; an Islamic university student should not neglect his people. He would take a lead in mobilizing them and struggling for their rights from the government. He can even guide his constituency or people in general to present a bill to the House of Assembly and the Senate to provide social amenities or make them enact laws on some vital projects. Political science and sociology students may, specifically, serve better in this regard.

8-Women decent Islamic dress: A university wherever situated must have a direct or an indirect impact on its host society by shaping the mode and style of people's life. Women in the society, more especially the youth, are mostly adapting the female university students' lifestyle indiscriminately. Other universities leave the mode of dress to the discretion of the students, never minding what indecent dress they would choose. This would undoubtedly affect the society. Female Muslim students would dress modestly in order to give a model role example and make fellow women in the society emulate them and have a better life.

9-It would be very interesting, indeed, if medicine students come out to reach the society under guidance of their lecturers to give free treatment and teach people some rudiments of health.

All these and many more are rooms that the students from various departments would simply concern themselves with the society. As a workforce, they would acquire experience that enables them to know how to tackling such issues in a better way before they disperse in the society. And it would certainly benefit them in the future. Albert Einstein once wisely said, "Education is that which remains after you have forgotten everything you learned in school"^{xlvii}.

The goal of this assistance can be achieved by the individual or by the organization. The role of the individual is very limited while the achievements of organizations will be very far reaching, for many hands gather together for achieving the goal.

Conclusion

Sheikh al-Barmawi, 'Usman bn Ibrahim (d.816 A.H), one of the great scholars in ninth Hijiri century, says, "A learned person is a deputy of Allah"^{xlvi}. Whatever a student does during his stay at university/college, he should realize that one day he would go back to the society and find people still waiting for him to harvest what he sows. It is true that the nature of studies blinds a student from seeing the reality until he has graduated and becomes an integral part of the society, for example a title-holder, a government official or a civil servant, or even like other ordinary people. Then he would attest that he has been in a hallucination state during his university study! Let the student not isolate himself from the society. Sheikh Wazir Junaidu has spoken the truth in saying, "If the scholar isolates himself from society he will have betrayed science and failed to carry out his study to the nation. I said to the Nigerian universities' scholars; let not your degrees, researches and publications be an excuse to feel haughty amongst your own people"^{xlix}.

This paper, in its first segment, gives a brief explanation of the scope of the university and the history of the establishment of both Islamic and secular universities. It also goes further to mention clear differences between the two. It calls upon students to be of critical thinking on the current situation of the society. They would welcome whatever draws benefits to their people and confront evil things that may befall the society if care is not taken!

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